

ABSTRACT

A method and system for automatically calibrating a masking process simulator are disclosed. The method and system include performing a masking process using a calibration mask and process parameters to produce a calibration pattern on a wafer. A digital image is created of the calibration pattern, and the edges of the pattern are detected from the digital image using pattern recognition. Data defining the calibration mask and the process parameters are then input to a process simulator to produce an alim image estimating the calibration pattern that would be produced by the masking process. The method and system further include overlaying the alim image and the detected edges of the digital image, and measuring a distance between contours of the pattern in the alim image and the detected edges. Thereafter, one or more mathematical algorithms are used to iteratively change the values of the processing parameters input to the simulator until a set of processing parameter values are found that produces a minimum distance between the contours of the pattern in the alim image and the detected edges, thereby effectively calibrating the process simulator to compensate for process variations of the masking process.